

## Article

# Research on Integration and Practice of Parent-Child Dance in Preschool Dance Teaching

Yanpeng Wei <sup>1,\*</sup><sup>1</sup> Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology, Haikou, China

\* Correspondence: Yanpeng Wei, Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology, Haikou, China

**Abstract:** This study investigates the integration and practical application of parent-child dance in preschool dance teaching within the broader context of quality-oriented education reform and the deepening collaboration between families and kindergartens. Drawing on the physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional developmental characteristics of children aged 3–6, the research aligns the pedagogical design of parent-child dance with the core principles of children’s art education. It systematically analyzes the multidimensional educational value of parent-child dance, including its role in fostering emotional attachment, enhancing motor coordination, cultivating aesthetic perception, and strengthening home–school partnerships. On the basis of literature review, classroom observation, and practice-based reflection, the study examines the current implementation status in kindergartens and identifies prominent challenges, such as fragmented instructional design, insufficient professional competence of teachers in dance and family communication, low and uneven parental participation, and a lack of age-appropriate teaching resources. These constraints limit the sustainable development and educational effectiveness of parent-child dance activities. In response, the study proposes targeted optimization strategies, including age-differentiated curriculum design, systematic teacher training, structured parental guidance mechanisms, and the development of specialized teaching materials and evaluation tools. The findings demonstrate that the deep integration of parent-child dance into preschool dance education can diversify instructional formats, promote children’s holistic development, and provide a replicable model for innovative, collaborative art education between schools and families.

**Keywords:** preschool dance education; parent-child dance; early childhood art education; home-school collaboration; parental involvement; holistic child development

## 1. Introduction

Parent-child dance is an art form that emphasizes interaction between parents and children, combining dance movements, musical rhythms, and emotional communication. It diverges from traditional dance teaching methods in kindergartens by actively involving families in early childhood dance education, aligning with the developmental needs of children who thrive on family companionship and enjoy engaging in interactive games. As a distinctive form of interactive art education, parent-child dance adheres to the cognitive principles of young children, who naturally gravitate toward play as their primary activity [1]. It also addresses the emotional needs of children for close and meaningful contact with their parents during early childhood. As an essential aspect of early childhood art education, dance instruction not only nurtures aesthetic appreciation and enhances physical coordination but also serves the broader educational purpose of fostering emotional growth and cultivating positive social skills. In the context of advancing comprehensive quality education and promoting deeper collaboration between families and schools, the traditional teaching model—characterized by teacher demonstrations and child imitation—has proven insufficient to meet the holistic developmental needs of children and the growing expectations of parents for active participation in early education. Conventional preschool dance classes often require

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children to passively mimic teachers' movements, which limits opportunities for independent expression and emotional engagement. Furthermore, the exclusion of parents from the teaching process creates a disconnect between family education and kindergarten art education, hindering the potential for a more integrated and collaborative approach.

Incorporating parent-child dance into early childhood dance education provides children with emotional support from family members during dance activities, enabling them to experience the joy of movement through interactive engagement [2]. This approach also allows parents to gain a deeper understanding of their children's artistic learning progress, fostering a stronger partnership between kindergartens and families [3]. Although some kindergartens have begun to implement parent-child dance programs, these efforts are often limited to seasonal performances rather than being part of a regular, systematic teaching framework. As a result, the educational potential of these activities remains underutilized. Many kindergartens only organize parent-child dance performances during festivals such as Children's Day and New Year's Day, without integrating these activities into the daily dance curriculum. This limits the long-term educational impact of parent-child dance, leaving it as a superficial activity rather than a meaningful component of early childhood education [4]. Therefore, conducting comprehensive research on effective integration methods and practical strategies for parent-child dance in early childhood education is crucial. Such research can provide valuable insights into developing teaching models that align with children's developmental characteristics, enriching the content of dance curricula, and innovating formats for art education. Additionally, it can strengthen home-school collaboration practices and address the current gap in practical research on parent-child dance integration within domestic preschool dance education. This work offers a significant reference point for advancing reforms in preschool art education and enhancing the overall quality of early childhood learning experiences.

## **2. Multidimensional Educational Value of Integrating Parent-Child Dance into Preschool Dance Instruction**

### *2.1. Emotional Nurturing Value: Strengthening Parent-Child Bond and Cultivating Positive Emotions*

Early childhood represents a pivotal stage for emotional development, during which fostering a sense of security and strengthening parent-child bonds significantly contributes to children's mental well-being. During this developmental phase, children benefit immensely from consistent parent-child companionship and meaningful emotional interactions, which help establish a foundation for self-identity and emotional stability [5]. Parent-child dance serves as an effective medium for nurturing these connections, utilizing physical interaction—such as hand-holding, hugging, and synchronized movements—to deepen emotional ties [5, 6]. Unlike routine verbal communication, the integration of musical rhythm and coordinated movements in dance introduces a dynamic and ceremonial quality to interactions, making them more engaging and memorable. The harmonious combination of music and movement fosters a warm and inviting atmosphere, breaking down barriers and enabling a more profound emotional exchange between parents and children. This shared experience not only enhances children's sense of security and self-confidence but also provides a platform for emotional fulfillment. Furthermore, the joyful and interactive nature of parent-child dance allows children to release pent-up negative emotions, replacing them with positive feelings such as happiness and joy. Over time, this contributes to the development of an optimistic and cheerful disposition, which is essential for long-term psychological health. Regular participation in parent-child dance activities can also mitigate anxiety and withdrawal tendencies in group settings, fostering improved emotional regulation and adaptability. By creating a supportive and nurturing environment, parent-child dance lays a robust foundation for children's emotional resilience and overall well-being [6, 7].

### *2.2. Aesthetic Enlightenment Value: Enriching Aesthetic Experiences and Cultivating Aesthetic Perception*

Family dance programs integrate musical elements, choreography, and costume design, serving as a vital medium for aesthetic education in early childhood. Preschool aesthetic education emphasizes guiding children to perceive, experience, and express beauty, while parent-child dance creates a natural and relaxed environment for achieving these objectives. Through such activities, children are encouraged to explore musical rhythms and melodic patterns under parental guidance, engage with the artistic expression of dance movements, and actively participate in selecting props and costumes, thereby discovering the aesthetic harmony of color combinations and visual arrangements. Unlike traditional dance instruction in kindergartens, personalized parental involvement introduces a broader spectrum of aesthetic experiences. Parents can delve into the artistic significance of dance themes, fostering children's ability to interpret beauty through physical movements [8]. For instance, parents might help children connect the gentle flow of spring rhythms or the vibrant energy of summer beats to their dance expressions, enabling them to associate dance with broader life aesthetics. This collaborative engagement in perceiving, experiencing, and expressing beauty not only enhances children's aesthetic sensitivity but also strengthens their ability to articulate artistic concepts. By immersing children in these enriched aesthetic experiences, parent-child dance activities contribute significantly to their foundational artistic growth and development [9].

### *2.3. Educational Synergy Value: Enhancing Home-School Communication to Form Educational Synergy*

The foundation of effective collaboration between preschools and families lies in establishing robust communication mechanisms that align educational philosophies and practices. Historically, communication methods between kindergartens and parents have been limited to traditional formats such as parent meetings, messaging groups, and communication logs, which often lack depth in emotional and experiential engagement [10]. Parent-child dance programs offer a transformative platform for interaction, surpassing conventional methods by fostering dynamic and participatory experiences. These programs enable parents to gain a deeper understanding of preschool dance education objectives, instructional strategies, and the unique learning characteristics of children. Simultaneously, educators can observe children's behaviors in a home-like context and gain insights into parental educational approaches, facilitating more tailored guidance. The consistent implementation of parent-child dance activities strengthens the connection between educational institutions and families, harmonizing artistic education principles with child development strategies. This integrated approach not only enhances the mutual reinforcement of preschool education and family upbringing but also establishes a cohesive educational framework. The synergy created through such collaboration extends beyond dance instruction, influencing various aspects of children's growth and development. By fostering comprehensive support from both family and kindergarten, this model ensures a holistic approach to nurturing children's physical, emotional, and cognitive development.

## **3. Current Status and Outstanding Issues of Integrating Parent-Child Dance into Preschool Dance Education**

### *3.1. The instructional design lacks systematicness, with monotonous integration approaches*

The current integration of parent-child dance into early childhood dance education exhibits significant fragmentation and a lack of standardized instructional frameworks. In many cases, kindergartens treat parent-child dance as supplementary activities for festive events or family-oriented gatherings, rather than embedding it into a structured and consistent curriculum. There is an absence of comprehensive curriculum systems that include detailed weekly teaching plans, monthly activity schedules, and clearly defined

phased teaching objectives. Parent-child dance activities are often conducted on an ad hoc basis, without alignment to age-specific developmental needs or cognitive patterns of children [1, 11]. This lack of systematic planning results in activities that fail to provide meaningful educational outcomes. Frequently, the integration relies on pre-designed dance routines that lack creativity in thematic development or movement innovation, leading to content that feels disconnected from children's everyday experiences and cognitive realities [12]. This disconnection diminishes the ability to captivate and engage both children and their parents effectively. Furthermore, the instructional process tends to emphasize performance outcomes over experiential and interactive learning. Teachers often focus excessively on achieving precision in standardized dance movements, requiring repetitive practice that overlooks the importance of fostering emotional connections and collaborative engagement between parents and children. This performance-centric approach neglects the intrinsic educational value of parent-child dance, as it fails to prioritize children's enjoyment, curiosity, and the nurturing of parent-child bonds. Consequently, the potential of parent-child dance as a tool for holistic development and meaningful interaction remains largely unrealized, underscoring the need for a more thoughtful and systematic approach to its integration.

### *3.2. Insufficient professional competence of teachers and room for improvement in mentoring skills*

Early childhood dance educators play a pivotal role in harmonizing parent-child dance activities with structured dance instruction, where their professional expertise significantly influences the success of these integrative practices. While many preschool dance teachers possess basic teaching skills, there are evident gaps in their ability to choreograph and facilitate parent-child dance routines effectively. A key challenge lies in their limited knowledge of designing choreography tailored to the developmental stages and interactive needs of young children. Instead of creating age-appropriate movements, some educators adapt adult dance routines, which often prove unsuitable. These movements may either exceed the physical coordination abilities of young children or fail to engage both children and parents due to their simplicity. Such mismatched choreography can hinder the active participation and enjoyment of both parties, ultimately reducing the effectiveness of the activity. Furthermore, many educators prioritize demonstrating dance movements to children while overlooking the importance of guiding parents. This lack of parental instruction often results in confusion and anxiety, as parents struggle to understand their role in collaborative participation. Without clear explanations of the educational value and coordination techniques of parent-child dance activities, the overall teaching outcomes are compromised. Additionally, a limited grasp of home-school collaboration concepts prevents educators from fostering effective communication with parents. This communication gap makes it challenging to convey educational philosophies and establish a cohesive approach to parent-child dance instruction, further highlighting the need for professional development in this area.

### *3.3. Relative scarcity of teaching resources and lack of dedicated support systems*

Currently, there is a significant shortage of specialized teaching resources for parent-child dance programs aimed at preschool education, creating substantial challenges for the systematic integration of such activities. Instructional materials tailored to young children remain underdeveloped, with a notable absence of comprehensive textbooks designed specifically for parent-child dance. Existing resources are largely limited to fragmented dance videos and action diagrams, which lack cohesive designs for teaching objectives, instructional processes, and evaluation frameworks. Furthermore, there is a critical gap in materials that categorize difficulty levels based on age groups, such as 3-4 years old, 4-5 years old, and 5-6 years old, complicating lesson preparation for educators. The development of diverse dance themes that resonate with children's cognitive and experiential understanding is also insufficient. Regarding teaching props and music, the

equipment used in kindergarten parent-child dance programs often relies on generic props that fail to provide specificity or enhance entertainment value. Musical resources suitable for these programs are similarly limited, with some compositions featuring overly fast rhythms and intricate melodies that do not align with the auditory preferences and developmental characteristics of young children. Additionally, digital teaching resources are notably scarce, including specialized instructional videos and interactive online courses. This deficiency hampers educators' ability to meet teaching demands and restricts parents' capacity to engage in effective after-school practice with their children.

#### **4. Practical Optimization Strategies for Integrating Parent-Child Dance into Early Childhood Dance Education**

##### *4.1. Establishing a Systematic Teaching Framework and Innovating Integrated Practical Approaches*

Kindergartens should incorporate parent-child dance into their regular dance curriculum by developing age-appropriate teaching objectives and plans that align with the physical and cognitive development patterns of children aged 3 to 6. The curriculum design should adhere to the principle of gradual progression, establishing distinct activity goals and content for younger, middle, and older age groups. For younger children, the focus should be on simple physical interactions and music-based games that prioritize emotional engagement and movement awareness. Middle-grade children can engage in more playful and coordinated dance routines, which encourage collaborative creation of simple dance sequences with their parents. Older children should participate in parent-child dance choreography activities that nurture creativity and teamwork skills. For instance, junior classes might engage in "hand-in-hand rhythm games," middle classes could explore "parent-child creative dance activities," and senior classes might organize "parent-child dance festivals" centered around thematic events. To move beyond rigid rehearsal formats, educators should design diverse dance activities that integrate children's daily experiences, cognitive development, and festive themes [1]. Examples include "Parent-Child Rhythm Games," "Dance Choreography Competitions," and "Outdoor Dance Festivals." By blending dance with games, everyday life, and artistic expression, children can experience dance in a relaxed and enjoyable environment while strengthening parent-child bonds. Emphasizing the principle of "light performance, heavy experience," standardized dance movements should be minimized. Instead, the focus should shift to fostering emotional communication and interactive engagement, making these elements the core of teaching practices. This approach ensures that children not only develop physical and creative skills but also deepen their emotional connections with their parents through shared experiences in dance.

##### *4.2. Enhancing teachers' professional competence and strengthening professional guidance capabilities*

To address the limitations in dance teaching capabilities among educators involved in parent-child activities, kindergartens should establish comprehensive and structured professional development programs. These programs must focus on improving choreography skills and instructional methodologies, aligning closely with the practical demands of classroom teaching. A multifaceted approach, incorporating specialized lectures, live demonstrations, and hands-on practice, can significantly enhance the effectiveness of such training. Workshops led by experts in parent-child dance education and professional dance instructors should delve into key areas such as choreography fundamentals, designing movements suitable for different developmental stages, interactive teaching strategies, and fostering effective communication between home and school [9]. Regularly organized teaching research sessions can serve as platforms for educators to collaboratively address complex teaching scenarios, exchange valuable insights, and share exemplary practices, thereby fostering a culture of continuous professional growth. Educators should be encouraged to design tailored parent-child

dance routines that reflect the developmental needs and learning objectives of children, ensuring these activities are both engaging and educational. During sessions, teachers should provide clear guidance to both children and parents, emphasizing the developmental benefits of dance and offering practical tips for coordination. Parents should be motivated to participate with a positive and supportive attitude, fostering meaningful emotional connections with their children. Furthermore, individualized support should be provided to address specific interaction patterns, enabling educators to promptly resolve any challenges that arise during the teaching process.

#### *4.3. Establish a diversified evaluation mechanism and improve the teaching evaluation system*

To establish a more inclusive and comprehensive evaluation mechanism for parent-child dance education, it is essential to move beyond traditional, singular assessment criteria and evaluators. A holistic approach is necessary to provide a more objective and multidimensional evaluation of teaching effectiveness. Historically, evaluation methods have overly emphasized children's dance skills, which presents a narrow perspective and fails to capture the broader value of parent-child dance. The proposed evaluation framework adopts an integrated system that encompasses multiple dimensions, including child development, parent-child interaction, and parental engagement [10]. Key areas of assessment include children's emotional well-being, physical development, aesthetic appreciation, creative thinking, the quality of parent-child interactions, emotional communication, and the transformation of parents' educational philosophies and collaborative abilities. The evaluation process incorporates diverse perspectives, such as teacher assessments, self-evaluations by children, peer reviews among participants, and parental feedback. Teachers conduct evaluations through direct observation and systematic record-keeping, while children articulate their experiences through simple verbal or physical expressions. Parents contribute by reflecting on their participation, interaction quality, and educational insights gained. This collaborative evaluation process fosters mutual improvement, as teachers provide professional insights into instructional outcomes, children share their personal experiences, and parents assess their involvement and its impact. The results are promptly communicated to educators and parents, enabling the refinement of teaching plans, the optimization of instructional strategies, and the enhancement of parental engagement. Ultimately, this dynamic and participatory evaluation mechanism serves as a foundation for continuously improving the quality and effectiveness of parent-child dance education, ensuring it meets the evolving needs of all participants.

### **5. Conclusion**

Parent-child dance programs represent a distinctive educational approach that merges the artistic expression of dance with meaningful parent-child interaction. These programs not only offer young children enriching artistic experiences but also foster their emotional, physical, aesthetic, and social development. By incorporating such programs into dance education, they act as a vital bridge between kindergartens and families, enhancing home-school collaboration and diversifying the methods and content of dance instruction. Despite their potential, the current implementation of parent-child dance programs in early childhood education faces notable challenges. These include the absence of systematic instructional frameworks, gaps in teacher expertise, limited parental involvement, inadequate teaching resources, and a lack of robust evaluation mechanisms. These barriers restrict the full realization of the educational and developmental benefits that parent-child dance programs can provide, thereby limiting their capacity to drive innovation in early childhood dance pedagogy. Addressing these challenges is crucial to unlocking the transformative potential of this educational practice.

To fully integrate parent-child dance programs into early childhood education, a collaborative effort among kindergartens, educators, and parents is imperative. Kindergartens must take the lead in establishing comprehensive teaching frameworks,

expanding access to diverse educational resources, and implementing multifaceted evaluation systems to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of these programs. Educators, on the other hand, need to continuously refine their professional skills, explore innovative teaching methodologies, and provide specialized guidance to enhance the quality of parent-child dance activities. Parents play an equally critical role by embracing modern educational perspectives, actively engaging in dance activities, and fostering meaningful emotional connections with their children. Their active participation is essential to creating a supportive and interactive learning environment. Looking ahead, as reforms in early childhood education continue to evolve, parent-child dance programs are expected to become more seamlessly integrated into routine teaching practices. This integration will not only amplify their role in fostering children's holistic development but also strengthen the collaborative bond between families and educational institutions, paving the way for more dynamic and inclusive approaches to early childhood education.

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